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***Comes As Some Oppose Summer Nutrition Programs for Missouri Children, Designed to Help Them Succeed***

(WASHINGTON) - Today, Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-3) voted for the Agriculture Appropriations Act, legislation that will help provide struggling families with nutritious food.

To protect low-income women, children and senior citizens faced with rising food costs and shrinking wages, the legislation increases nutrition aid to families. It expands services to an additional 700,000 women and children and creates new programs to help ensure that American families do not go hungry.

**"By passing this bill, we are helping Missouri families put nutritious food on the table during these tough times,"** said Congressman Carnahan. **"This is an absolute necessity to ensure that all Americans have access to healthy food for their families."**

The concern about children's nutrition has grown as the number of Missouri students participating in the school-year lunch program rose 3.1 percent last year. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Missouri participation grew from 626,194 students in February 2008 to 645,575 students in February 2009. According to a Feeding America report one in five Missouri children currently lives with hunger.

As students are away from school during the summer months, programs like the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) helps assure that children 18 years of age and under whose family incomes are less than or equal to 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines have access to nutritious meals. When school is not in session, SFSP provides reimbursement to community agencies continuing meals during the summer months.

**"Nutritious foods are the most basic of needs,"** said Carnahan. **"The availability of healthy food for kids in need is proven to reduce the risk of costly health problems and improve their chances of succeeding."**

Congressman Carnahan has consistently supported the funding of programs designed to help children and families in need. Earlier this year the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, supported by Carnahan, designated \$100 million in competitive grants for schools to purchase school food service equipment through the National School Lunch Program.

Also included in the Agriculture Appropriations Act were investments in conservation including \$400,000 for the Missouri Botanical Garden's Virtual Plant Database. The investment will be used to enhance access to data that can be used for conservation programs. Scientists are in great need of information on the biodiversity resources in the world and this database will provide greater access to the needed information.

Missouri Botanical Garden's Virtual Plant Database is recognized worldwide. Additional funding will improve access, analysis, and management of critical botanical information for botanists, other scientists and users of plant data.

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